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ABSTRACT

A study examined what parents of preschool children (infancy through age five) do to help their children get ready for a formal reading program, such as how often parents carried out prereading activities and how the activities compared with those generally suggested by early childhood education experts. Surveys completed by 157 parents indicated (1) which of five basic behaviors were a part of the parents' interaction with their preschool child, (2) other reading related activities in which parents participated, (3) the number of minutes per week in which parents were involved in these activities, and (4) the sources of their knowledge about the activities. The results indicated that the majority of respondents read stories on request at bedtime, usually reading the book and looking at the pictures, as well as pausing periodically to ask questions about the story. Most children asked for a specific story, parents' book selection usually reflected their childhood favorites, and mothers responded most often to the child's request for a story. Most parents read to their child daily, and gifts, bookstores, and public libraries were the sources for most children's books. Parents'childhood experiences provided information about reading readiness activities, and pointing to and reading signs was the most frequently mentioned "other" activity. Finally, "Sesame Street" was the favorite television program; most children watched one or more hours of television per day, and most rempondents considered themselves good reading role models for their child. (Tables of data constitute the bulk of the report. (HTH)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

HOW PARENTS PREPARE THEIR CHILDREN FOR A FORMAL READING PROGRAM

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to learn what parents of pre-school children (infancy through five) do to help their children get ready for a formal reading program. Our assumption was that there are certain basic activities that parents participate in with their children that they believe will help children get ready to read. The study was designed to find out what these activities are, how often they are performed, and how they compare with those generally suggested by experts in early education.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

In the current literature, numerous educators have reported their findings related to the study of the parent's role and school success in reading (Bradley and Caldwell, Marie Clay, and Delores Durkin). They have identified certain basic parental behaviors that have a positive effect on children in preparing them for a formal reading program. These behaviors can be summarized as follows:

1. talking with and listening to your child
2. reading to your child
3. being a reading model for your child
4. involving your child in a variety of recreational activities
5. going places with your child

These behaviors were included in our survey as possible ones for the parent to select but the respondents were not limited to these choices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We developed a survey form by meeting with a small reaction group of parents whose children were in the Project for the Study of Young Children (PSYC) during the 1982-83 academic year. The purpose of this group was to help us refine our questions as well as to develop new ones based on their comments.

The survey form was then distributed to all the PSYC parents, Prince of Peace Preschool parents and Mrs. Frances' Day Care Center parents. The questionnaire asked the respondents to check which of the five basic behaviors were a part of their interaction with their child. They were also asked to add other activities and rank all in order of their importance. They were also asked to estimate the number of minutes per week in which the parent was involved in these activities. Finally, they were asked to identify the sources of their knowledge, e.g., articles, books, friends, their own parents, teachers, etc. We distributed 305 survey forms and received a return of 157. Some of the parents had more than one child ages 3 through 6. Our final results indicate that 265 students were reported on in our study.

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RESULTS

The results of the respondents from all three sites, the Project for the Study of Young Children, Prince of Peace Preschool and Mrs. Frances Day Care Center are reported below:

A. Reading to your child

1. Review the list of possible activities below. Place a "1" for each activity if it is something you regularly do (once a week or more). Place a "2" before each item that you occasionally do (once or twice a month). Place an "N" for those you never do.

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
(89%) 89.18%	9.55%	0%	1.27%	0%	reading, bedtime stories
(86%) 85.99%	12.09%	0%	.637%	0%	reading a book upon request
22.28%	29.29%	28.65%	18.46%	5%	asking another child in the family to read to your non-reader
17.19%	40.75%	36.29%	5.73%	0%	reading a book after seeing a TV program
		Other			(Use back of sheet, if necessary)

2. When you read to a child, do you do any of the following? Put a "1" if you do it regularly and a "2" if you do it occasionally.

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
17.83%	61.79%	5.73%	14.64%	0%	read the entire story and not talk about the pictures.
(87%) 86.63%	12.73%	0%	.637	0%	look at the pictures and read the story.
(55%) 54.76%	36.93%	1.27%	7.017%	0%	pause from time to time to ask questions as you read the story, i.e., ask where the story is taking place? Who is the story about?
38.84%	54.76%	1.274%	5.096%	0%	read the story and pause occasionally to ask: "What do you suppose will happen next?"

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
49.09%	40.75%	1.27%	8.91%	0%	read the story and ask your child to say words he/she know as you read the story, i.e., The Ltte Engine That Could or other repetitive phrases in books.
26.74%	53.488%	7.64%	12.73%	0%	read the story and ask your child to point to words he/she can recognize.
24.466%	56.673%	6.37%	12.096%	0%	after reading a story, do you ask your child what was the favorite part he/she heard?
11.459%	63.063%	5.096%	12.73%	0%	after reading a story, do you ask your child to retell it to you?
(80.899%)	(15.281%)	(1.274%)	(2.548%)		
80.90%	15.28%	1.27%	2.55%	0%	does your child ask you to re-read a specific story?

3. When you select books for your child, are you influenced by any of the following? Put a "1" by those that regularly influence you and a "2" by those that occasionally influence you.

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
45.844%	38.206%	0%	15.918%	0%	Child's favorite author
78.351%	14.644%	.637%	6.37%	0%	Pictures/illustrations
19.737%	38.843%	5.733%	35.025%	.637%	Librarian's suggestion
23.555%	41.[illegible]41%	3.822%	31.203%	0%	Introduced at school
32.477%	41.391%	1.911%	24.196%	0%	Friend's recommendation
46.481%	35.662%	1.911%	15.912%	0%	Length
56.036%	31.203%	0%	12.733%	0%	Your Childhood favorites
7.644%	45.207%	3.822%	43.302%	0%	Introduced at story hour
9.555%	52.214%	5.096%	32.477%	0%	Mentioned or dramatized on TV

4. When your child wants to have a story read, who responds to this request? Put a "1" if you are the primary person who responds, and a "2" if others do it.

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
92.365%	5.733%	0%	1.911%	0%	Mother
.637%	21.648%	4.450%	68.796%	4.459%	Child's brother
3.185%	55.399%	.637%	39.48%	1.274%	Babysitter
1.279%	25.466%	1.911%	70.707%	.637%	Family friends
38.206%	48.392%	0%	12.733%	0%	Father
5.733%	17.192%	2.548%	70.07%	4.459%	Child's sister
5.733%	54.762%	.637%	37.573%	1.274%	Other relatives (grandmother, grandfather, etc.
.637%	3.822%	.637%	94.276%	.637%	Other. Specify (No Names Given)

5. How often does your child have someone read to him? Put a "1" by the primary and a "2" by others.

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
77.077%	9.555%	0%	13.37%	0%	Daily
1.274%	35.625%	0%	60.515%	0%	Monthly
1.911%	31.84%	0%	66.248%	0%	Weekends only
5.096%	38.206%	0%	56.673%	0%	Weekly
12.096%	32.477%	0%	54.762%	0%	Twice a week
8.281%	17.192%	0%	74.529%	0%	Other

6. Where do you secure the books that you read to your children? Indicate the primary sources with a "1" and secondary sources with a "2".

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
(64%) 63.68%	28.655%	0%	7.144%	0%	Gifts to child
11.459%	30.566%	1.911%	56.036%	0%	School library
(52%) 52.214%	35.025%	0%	19.737%	0%	Book stores

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
45.844%	33.114%	0%	21.011%	0%	Public library
4.459%	24.833%	2.548%	68.159%	0%	Homemade by parent, relatives or friends
14.644%	31.84%	3.185%	50.296%	0%	Book clubs

7. What are some of the other activities not already mentioned in your responses that you do to help your child prepare for reading? Please give specific examples. 16.555% No Response

pt to & read signs	33.751%
games (to identify sounds)	24.833%
games (board/card/matching memory)	18.466%
spell or write out words upon request	17.192%
write out tne alphabet	16.555%
books & cassettes (tapes)	12.096%
readiness workbooks & sheets	11.459%
spell or write words with blocks	10.829%
LEA stories	8.918%
rhyming words and breaking up compound words	8.281%
write messages & notes	6.37%
flash cards	6.37%
magazine activities	5.096%
visual/motor (handedness) activities oral directions	5.096%
talk about words & letters & cut them out of magazines	4.45%
comics & newspapers	4.45%
computer	3.82%
child "reads" (pictures & books to oneself)	3.82%
trips to library & attend story hour	3.82%
drawing	3.185%
coloring & painting	3.185%
helps in cooking & reading "game" directions	3.185%
Speak & Spell	2.55%
look up things in reference bks and Table of Contents	2.55%
Britannica's Readiness Kit	1.911%
T.V. watching	1.911%
read a bk w/child and do a DRTA	1.911%
puzzles	1.911%
blackboard, magic slate and homemade books	1.911%
bedtime stories	1.911%
records, tape recorder or slides	1.911%
typewriter	1.911%
plays & theatre	1.911%
reciting nursery rhymes	1.911%
Speak & Read	1.274%
Make-up Stories	1.274%
reciting bible verses or Sabbath School verse	1.274%
video tapes & books	1.274%
counting	.637%
take trips (vacations)	.637%
interest in everything	.637%
reserve part of the day for special attention	.637%

8. Where did you get your ideas about reading and interacting with your child? Indicate the primary sources with a "1" and secondary sources with a "2".

1	2	No	No Res.	Not Appl.	
44.57%	28.655%	0%	26.744%	0%	Recalling your past experiences as a child
30.566%	38.843%	.637%	29.929%	0%	(Reading) books on parenting
36.936%	40.754%	.637%	21.648%	0%	(Reading) articles on parenting and the subject
26.744%	26.744%	1.911%	44.571%	0%	College courses
6.37%	28.655%	2.548%	62.426%	0%	TV talk show (guest/speaker)
65.611%	12.733%	.637%	21.011%	0%	Intuition
17.829%	5.733%	1.274%	75.166%	0%	Other (i.e., aunts and mother; family, friends and women's discussion groups)

9. Are there any favorite TV programs that your child watches?
5.096% NO 93.64 YES .63 No Response .637 It varies & more on weekends

1st Choice	NAME OF PROGRAM	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
44%	Sesame Street	22%	3%
9%	Mr. Rogers	16%	16%
6%	Cartoons (Name not listed)	13%	16%
6%	3-2-1 Contact	6%	6%
16%	He Man	0%	6%
0%	Electric Co.	6%	6%
0%	Wheel of Fortune	6%	3%
0%	G.I. Joe	3%	3%
3%	Kids' Break	0%	0%
0%	Nickleodeon	3%	0%
0%	Cable HBO/Video Movies	0%	6%
0%	Kids' Specials on Super TV	0%	3%
0%	Knight Rider	0%	3%
0%	Auto Man	0%	3%
0%	I Love Lucy	0%	3%
0%	It's Academic	0%	3%
0%	Dusty's Tree House	0%	3%
0%	Fame	3%	0%

10. Does your child watch TV regularly?

9.555%	1/2 hour per day
31.84%	1 hour per day
48.392%	More than 1 hour per day
8.281%	Other (.637% 1 to 2 hrs/day; 1.274% 2 hrs/day; 3.185% 5 hrs/day; .637% twice per week; .637% do other activities; 1.911% rarely more than 1 hr/day; 1.274% 2 to 3 hrs/day; .637 1 hr/day & 2 hrs/weekend and .637% sporodically.

11. Does your child receive magazines through a subscription?
57.967% YES 42.028% NO If yes, list:

1st Choice	MAGAZINE	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
21.011	Sesame Street	3.822%	.637%
9.555%	Highlights	2.548%	0%
8.281% (Nat'l Wildlife)	Your Big Backyard	1.911%	.637%
3.822%	Turtle	1.274%	0%
3.822%	Humpty Dumpty	0%	.637%
2.548%	Friend	0%	0%
2.548%	Zoo World (Nat'l Geo.)	1.911%	0%
1.911%	Ranger Rick	1.274%	0%
.637%	Weekly Reader	.637%	0%
.637%	Childhood	0%	0%
.637%	Wee Wisdom	0%	0%
.637%	Cricket	.637%	0%
0%	WOW	.637%	0%
0%	Jack & Jill	0%	1.274%
0%	Cobblestone	.637%	0%
0%	Children's Friend	.637%	0%
0%	Chickadee	0%	.637%
0.%	Electric Co.	0%	.637%
0%	Pockets'	.637%	0%
0%	Happy Times	.637%	0%

12. Do you purchase magazines?
76.44% YES (1.911% said "yes" but listed nothing) 22.285% NO

If yes, list title and how regularly:

1st Choice	Magazine	2nd Choice
7.644%	Pre-School books	0%
5.096%	Sesame Street	.637%
2.548%	Pre-School Workbooks	0%
1.911%	Comic Books	0%
.637%	Care Bears	0%
.637%	ET Activity (Picture Book)	0%
.637%	Peanut Butter	0%
.637%	Muppets	0%
.637%	Variety	0%
.637%	Highlights	0%
.637%	Story Book from Japan	0%
0%	Coloring Books	.637%

13. Does your child ever get mail?

99.372% YES (98.098% specified/.637 didn't) .637% No 1 child received no mail!

98% Birthday cards
78% Letters/notes from grandparents
13% Other (9% friends; 6% magazines; 3% post cards; 6% wrote yes but didn't list anything and 6% cousins and relatives)
75% Holiday cards
38% Letters/notes from family friends

14. Does your child have any toys that you believe are helping him/her get ready to read? (If yes, list them.) 74.529% YES (14% of which didn't give specifics)
15.918% NO 9.555 No Response

44% magnetic letters
16% read along books
16% games
14% chalkboards & desks
12% Speak & Spell
10% flashcards
8% puzzles
8% computer
6% alphabet games
6% blocks
5% bks in child's personal library
5% reading workbooks
4% Touch & Tell
4% See & Say
3% Tracing letters & homemade alphabet cards
3% tape recorder
3% records
3% paper & pencils
3% (Tony) Typewriter
3% games - Memory/Lotto/Bingo
2% Speak & Read
2% coloring books
2% writing
1% spelling bees & games
1% Lap and Learn
1% Simon
1% puppets
1% easel
1% Children's Scrabble
1% Britannica's Readiness Program
1% Edu cards
1% legos
1% toys (no specifics)
1% dolls
1% pegboard
1% bicycle
1% Magic Wand
1% Quiz-a-Thon
1% signs
1% spellbound tapes

15. Do you consider yourself a reading model for your child?
63.68% YES 14.64% NO 1.27% No Response

(If your answer is yes, in what ways do you serve as a reading model?)

29% read newspapers & Magazines
26% reading for enjoyment
17% read daily
1.0% go to the library
.6% reading with enthusiasm to my child
3% talk about words & sounds
2% reading directions
4% reading books
1% siblings serve as reading models
1% pronouncing words
1% use books as references
1% crossword puzzles
1% have books around the house
1% write messages to each other
1% go to bookstores

16. Have you read a book/books to learn about your role in helping your child get ready to read?

14.644% YES 57.31% NO 28.018% No Response

(If yes, list the book/books that you read. Some examples are: Nancy Larrick's A Parent's Guide to Children's Reading, Norma Roger's How Can I Help My Child Get Ready To Read? and What Books and Records Should I Get for My Preschooler? Joan Beck's How To Raise a Brighter Child and Zena Sutherland and May Hill Arbuthnot's Children and Books.

9% Joan Beck. How To Raise A Brighter Child
4% Nancy Larrick. A Parents Guide to Children's Reading
3% Norma Rogers. How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?
3% Jim Trelease. Read Aloud
3% Norma Rogers. What Books & Records Should I Get For My Preschooler?
3% Glenn Doman. How To Teach Your Baby to Read
3% Children's Books
2% Parent's Magazine
1% Zutherland & Arbutnot. Children & Books
1% Arnoldson. Learing to Learn
1% Lillian Smith. The Reluctant Years - Hooked on Books
1% Evelyn Robinson. Reading About Children's Literature
1% John & Kay Linoskos. How To Grow a Young Reader
1% Pilgrim & McAllister. Books, Young People and Reading Guidance
1% Ruth Sawyer. The Way of The Story Teller
1% Marie Shedlock. The Art of Story Telling
1% Johnson & Johnson. Child Development
1% Kump. Break Through Rapid Reading
1% Gladys Hunt. Honey for a Child's Heart
1% Alvin Granowsky. A Parent's Primer
1% Virgie McIntyre. Reading Strategies
1% (author unknown). Teach Your Baby
1% (author unknown) How To Be A Gfted Parent
1% Growing Child
1% Montessori Books

7% listed no specific books/sources but checked yes
1% said Yes, but listed nothing, however, indicated that Mother was an Early Childhood Major in College